

Our Honor Legion--Shall Peary Be Elected to This Sphere of Immortals?--One Man Living Who Received This Distinction

BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.

Washington, D. C.
Shall the coveted "thanks of Congress" be bestowed upon Robert E. Peary?

Shall the man generally credited as the discoverer of the North Pole thus be elevated to the loftiest pedestal upon which the American people, through their Federal legislators, can place him?

The question is one of far greater weight and veneration than the public suspects. Indeed, doubtless very few readers of the current news have taken any cognizance whatever of the fact that the House Naval Committee's bill promoting Peary to the rank and emoluments of a rear-admiral on the retired list carries with it this honor of honors--the "thanks of Congress."

What knighthood is to the Britisher and the grand cord of the Legion of Honor is to the Frenchman, the distinction of having received the thanks of Congress is to the American.

May Sit Upon Seats of the Mighty.
In the hall of the House of Representatives, the great convulsive chamber of the nation, men who have received the thanks of Congress are always entitled to share the seats of the mighty along with the President, Cabinet, Supreme Court and other high functionaries of state there gathered together upon ceremonial occasions of great formality and import. Even upon workaday occasions the privileges of the floor of the House are extended to men who have been voted the nation's gratitude. Thus, if the Peary promotion bill now before Congress becomes law, the famous Arctic explorer will be entitled to pass the argus-eyed doorkeepers whenever the House is in session, and chat with members upon the floor, or within the inner room, leading thereto. It is never in order for the Speaker to even entertain a request for the suspension of this privilege, nor can it be laid aside by unanimous consent of the House itself. Only through official connection with the government can others gain the same privilege.

A seat upon the floor of the Senate during inaugural ceremonies will also be accorded Captain Peary, if the pending bill passes, although it is questionable whether the same privilege would be granted him were he a civilian. Senate precedents seem to limit this inaugural privilege to officers of the army and navy, who, by name, have received the thanks of Congress. But on no occasions other than the installation of a new administration is the privilege of the Senate floor extended even to military officers thus honored. The Senate, in recent times at least, has extended floor privileges to but one American outside the government establishment--George Bancroft, the historian--at Washington the First of the Legion.

What makes the honor of receiving



COMMODORE CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.

the nation's thanks all the greater is the fact that Washington himself heads the list of those who have received it. The Continental Congress conferred the distinction upon him by vote, in 1776, in recognition of his having effected the British evacuation of Boston.

Since then about forty names have been added to the roll of the immortals--the great heroes of the Revolution, of the engagements against Tripoli, the War of 1812 and of the Mexican and Civil Wars, and a few men who earned the same laurels by deeds performed outside the theatre of war.

This honor legion is now reduced to a single living member--George Dewey, hero of Manila Bay. No other hero of the Spanish-American war was thus signally honored. The bitterness of the Samson-Schley controversy blocked all efforts to extend the distinction to any of the heroes of the Santiago campaign. A similar wrangle had occurred some years before, when efforts were made to have Congress express its gratitude to Captain (now Rear Admiral) Schley for his relief of the



PEARY TO-DAY.



ADOLPH DAHLGREN.

navy, received the thanks of Congress in 1864.

To mention our war heroes who have received this distinction would be but to reproduce a long list of names and to direct a long series of evolutions, which you already know by heart.

Some time ago in reporting upon an application for this honor, made on behalf of one of our naval officers, the House Committee on Naval Affairs made its statement in its report: "A vote of thanks from Congress is the highest reward which any American naval officer can hope to receive for the most eminent services or the most extraordinary heroism." (Copyright, 1911, by John Elfreth Watkins.)

Raleigh Social News

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
Raleigh, N. C., February 4.--Governor W. W. Kitchin, the State officers and the members of the North Carolina General Assembly were the guests of the Raleigh Lodge of Elks, Friday evening, in the apartments of their splendid temple, for a delightful "smoker." Exalted Ruler W. S. Wilson, himself principal clerk in the Department of State, had the co-operation of a company of hospitable associate officers and Elks, who accorded entertainment that will be long and pleasantly remembered.

Mrs. J. S. Wynne, wife of Raleigh's Mayor, was hostess Friday afternoon for an "at-home" that was especially enjoyable. Mrs. James Powell and Miss Stanback were the honor guests. Mrs. Cuthbert were the honor guests of Mrs. Gregory Cannon Saturday afternoon from 1 to 6 o'clock. North Carolina long-leaf pine and cut-flowers were used with striking effect in the decorations. Mrs. Williamson, of Houston, Va., was among those who assisted in entertaining.

Mrs. William Royall entertained the Kenneth Book Club Tuesday afternoon at 4 o'clock, the meeting proving most enjoyable and the most delightful and agreeable notable the club has held this season.

The Misses Nelson, of Perth Amboy, N. J.; Eleanor Vass, Miss Ellen Dorton, Miss Jones and Mrs. Alex. Cooper, of Henderson, were the members in a pleasant box party given Monday night, Mrs. Cooper was chaperon, and after the theatre Miss Vass was hostess for a supper that was most enjoyable.

Mrs. James V. Joyner, wife of Hon. James V. Joyner, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, entertained Wednesday afternoon with Mrs. N. J. Rose and Miss Young as the honor guests.

It was an "at home," and every one of the hundred and more guests thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

Miss Mary A. Johnston entertained most charmingly at a bridge party Saturday morning, having as her guests Mrs. J. H. Stewart, of Elizabeth City; Mrs. E. W. Wood, of Edenton; Mrs. Brandt and Mrs. Griggs, of Athens, Ga.; Mrs. George P. Folk, Mrs. C. W. Gold, Mrs. A. J. Field, Mrs. E. B. Rouse, Miss Myrtle Miller and Mrs. F. M. Harper, of Raleigh.

Mrs. Joseph E. Pogue was the gracious hostess at a most enjoyable bridge party Sunday morning. The following several refreshments.

A delightful card party was given Saturday by Mrs. E. W. Richardson, of Washington, D. C. Following an exciting game of five hundred, refreshments were served by the hostess.

Friday afternoon Miss Florence Jones entertained complimentary to Mrs. F. P. Hobgood, Jr., wife of Senator Hobgood, of Greensboro. There were 100 callers. Palms and cut-flowers adorned the lovely home, and tea was served.

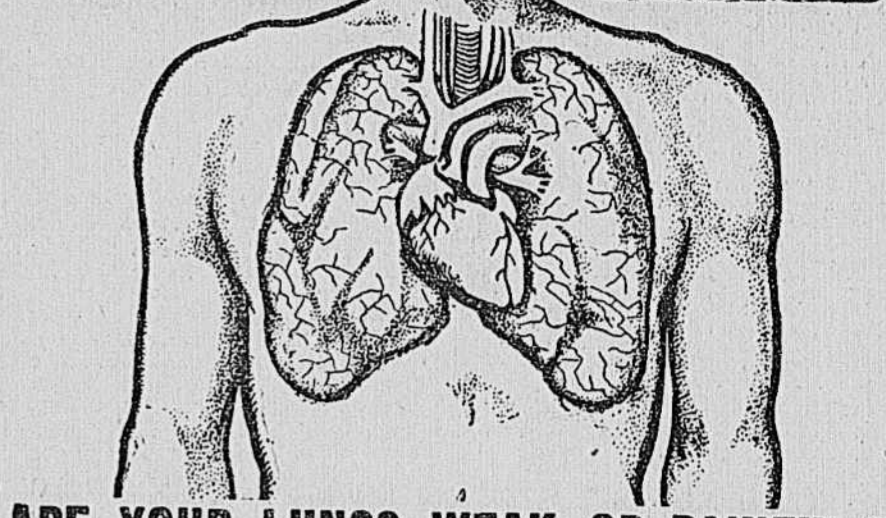
Mrs. W. C. Dowd, of Charlotte, wife of Speaker Dowd, of the House of Representatives, and Mrs. H. M. London, wife of Senator London, of Charlotte, were the guests Friday at a delightful luncheon by Mrs. Joseph Daniels. Among the guests were the wives of members of the General Assembly, who are here with their husbands. The centerpiece for the luncheon table was a superb composite bouquet made up of smaller ones for each of the guests.

Mrs. Alex. J. Field entertained at luncheon Friday, complimentary to Mrs. A. A. Hicks, of Oxford, wife of Senator Hicks. There were sixteen guests at a daintily set "round table." The luncheon was in six courses.

Wadesboro Social News

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
Wadesboro, N. C., February 4.--Mrs. W. P. Parsons was the charming hostess to the Book Club at its last meeting. The guests were met at the door by Mrs. James A. Harrison, and the evening of spring was suggested by the delightful odor of blooming narcissus, together with other noted plants. The program for the coming year was suggested by the club president, Mrs. John D. Leak, and during the year the club will study the history of North Carolina. The club selected the carnation with Southern smilax as the club flower, thus combining the club colors of pink, white and green. The feature of the afternoon's entertainment was a program of the characters of popular books arranged by the hostess. In the contest the honors went to Mrs. Eugene Little, and she was given a dainty piece of china, done in the club colors. The presentation was made by Mrs. Charles E. Harrison, and the member of the club, who leaves shortly for her home at Black Mountain. After musical selections by Mrs. Daisy Parsons, the guests enjoyed a dainty two-course luncheon. At the business session of the club, the following officers were chosen: President, Mrs. John D. Leak; Vice-President, Mrs. T. A. Marshall; Secretary, Mrs. Lila L. Henry; Treasurer, Mrs. James A. Harrison. The Tuesday Afternoon Club enjoyed a delightful meeting this week with Mrs. Fred J. Cox. In addition to the members of the club there were pres-

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ent a number of invited guests and a pleasing "primera" contest was arranged for the entertainment of those present. The successful word builder was Miss Johnnie Dunlap, who received the prize--a dainty cut-glass bonbon dish. The happy hostess served the guests an elegant luncheon.

Mrs. U. B. Blalock was hostess Tuesday evening to a number of guests at a progressive "forty-two party," and the occasion was a happy affair. In the entertainment Mrs. Blalock was assisted by Miss Sadie Stanback and Misses Elizabeth Christian and Virginia Horne. The prizes went to Adam Lockhart and Miss Flora McKinnon. The evening's entertainment closed with dainty refreshments.

Mrs. T. C. Cox is spending the week in Raleigh with her husband, who represents this county in the State Legislature. Mesdames R. L. Harrison and T. L. Caudle are visiting in Oxford. Mrs. S. B. Cottingham, of St. Louis, Mo., with her daughter, Mrs. T. W. Chablis.

Cards have been issued announcing the approaching wedding of Miss Inez Caudle, the attractive and cultured daughter of Mrs. A. B. Caudle, to Henry Lilly, of Albemarle. The marriage is to take place Tuesday evening, February 11, at the home of the bride's mother.

Wythesville Social News

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
Wythesville, Va., February 4.--Mrs. A. E. Thomas was the hostess of the Hundred Club and a number of invited guests on Tuesday afternoon.

Mrs. Virginia Dean is visiting friends in Blacksburg and attended the V. P. I. mid-winter session on Friday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Campbell and Stuart Campbell are at home after a visit to New York.

Rev. Francis Craighill, of St. John's Episcopal Church, held services in Pulaski Sunday morning and in Radford Sunday evening.

Remington Social News

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]
Remington, Va., February 4.--Mrs. A. W. Smith, accompanied by Dr. J. M. Caskie, left Tuesday for Charlottesville, where she will be at the hospital for treatment.

Miss Lizzie Humphrey, of Washington, D. C., is the guest of her uncle, H. C. Humphrey, for the past week.

Marion Caskie left this week for Lynchburg. S. C. Brittle, of Warrenton, visited Remington Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. W. W. Smith, and we agreeably entertained.

Misses Lila Brown and Louise Weaver have returned from a two weeks' visit to friends, and are the guests of Mrs. L. M. Brittle.

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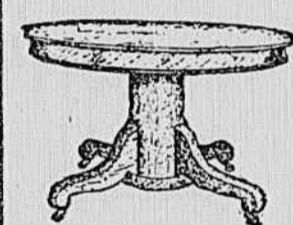
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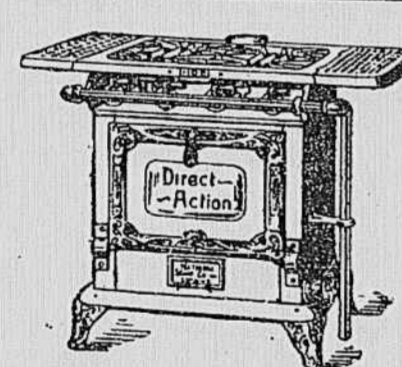
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Voted to Three Civilian.

The first civilian to be voted this distinction was "Commodore" Vanderbilt, known as the "Commodore." He received the thanks of Congress and a gold national medal in 1862 for presenting his steamship Vanderbilt to the government. He had just built this handsome steamship of 3,500 tons, as he said, demonstrating "that individual enterprise could, without the aid of government encouragement, place upon the ocean steamships equal, at least in magnitude, power and speed, to any which had been constructed under government patronage and protection in any part of the world."

He spent about \$1,000,000 on her, and she broke the transatlantic record. In March, 1862, he received a letter from Stanton asking him if he would undertake to prevent the Confederate steamer Merrimack from escaping out of Norfolk harbor. The commodore answered by telegraph that he would come to Washington next day, and arriving here, he had his first meeting with Stanton, who took him over to the White House to see Lincoln. And the outcome of this interview was that he offered Lincoln the Vanderbilt, which, he said, if properly manned, would either keep the Merrimack bottled up in Hampton Roads or sink her if she ventured out.

Lincoln asked the commodore to name the sum for which he would undertake the service. "Nothing will induce me, sir, to become a speculator upon the necessities of my country," said the commodore. "I make a gift of her to the government for the services proposed." And the ship was off Fort Monroe, on time, in three or four days.

Three years later Congress similarly thanked George Peabody, the noted philanthropist, "for his great and peculiar beneficence in giving a large sum of money, amounting to \$2,000,000, for the promotion of education in the more desolate of the Southern States."

Peabody, born in 1758, began clerking in a store in Danvers, Mass., when only eleven, and grew to build up the largest dry goods business of his generation. Although settling in London as a broker in 1837, he from there sent money to found the Peabody Institute and Museum, and founded over this country. The large donation for the promotion of education in the South was increased in 1869 to \$3,500,000. He spent millions on other philanthropies here and contributed \$2,500,000 for the building of model lodging houses for the poor of London.

Offered Peabody by Victoria.

Queen Victoria offered to make him a peer of England in 1867, but he declined. Then she presented him with a portrait of herself, which now hangs in the Institute. In 1869, and was the first private citizen of a foreign country to be honored by burial in Westminster Abbey, but with true American spirit, and also in order to carry out his wishes, his relatives had his remains removed to Massachusetts, to be beside those of his mother. The Monitor, the first frigate of the British navy, carried his body across the Atlantic, and it was received by an American squadron, commanded by Farragut. Gladstone's tribute to him was that he taught the world how a man might be the master of his fortune, and not its slave.

Two Inventors on Roll.

For laying the transatlantic cable Morse got the prized vote of thanks in 1865. In only two other cases has it been conferred for services performed otherwise than by force of arms.

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession, improvements in ordnance and zealous and efficient labors in the ordnance branch of the service," Captain John Adolph Dahlgren received such a formal expression of the nation's gratitude in 1864. While an ordnance officer, and later

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